



UNDER EMBARGO Until Monday, June 17 at 12:01 a.m. Eastern

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Florida adds more than 1.2 million children since 1990, with improvements in education, but loses ground in both health and economic well-being

30th KIDS COUNT® Data Book provides the most comprehensive annual report on child well-being in the United States and looks at changing demographics of U.S. children since 1990

TAMPA, Florida — Florida is now home to 1,213,176 more children than it was in 1990, and population projections show the number will increase by an additional 1.1 million by 2045. This continuous growth in the youth population will demand greater investments in state resources for children to have what they need to lead healthy, successful lives.

Florida's overall rank of 37th, compared to last year's ranking of 34th, shows the state is not moving in the right direction, according to the 30th edition of the *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The 2019 *Data Book* also reveals more than 800,000 Florida children live in poverty and that serious racial and ethnic disparities persist.

According to the *Data Book*, Florida is not faring as well as the U.S. on 10 of the 16 indicators that make up the index.

Health: Florida ranked 40th this year in this domain. There was some backward movement in the number of low birthweight babies, more child and teen deaths per 100,000 and more teens abusing alcohol or drugs, though these changes were not significantly different in 2017 than in 2010. The most troubling trend is in the number of children without health insurance. While there are fewer children without insurance in 2017 than in 2010, compared to last 2016 levels, more children were uninsured.

Economic Well-Being: While the economic domain ranking fell from 42nd last year to 45th this year, there were improvements in some of the indicators. Fewer children were living in poverty, more children had parents with secure employment, housing was more affordable and there were more adolescents either in school or working in 2017 than was the case in 2010.

Education: The education domain was ranked the same as last year (24th). The percentage of children ages 3 and 4 enrolled in school held steady and the proportion of eighth-graders proficient in math improved as compared to the levels reported in the 2018 *Data Book*. Improvements were observed in the proportion of fourth-graders whose reading scores improved and the graduation rate continues to improve.

Family and Community: Finally, the family and community domain ranking was about the same as reported in last year's *Data Book* (33rd versus 34th last year). A review of the indicators shows improvements in the number of children in families where the head of household has at least a high school degree, there were

decreases in the number of children living in areas of concentrated poverty, and fewer births to teenaged mothers. The number of children living in single-parent families held steady at 39 percent, as compared to 2010.

“Of course we are happy to see improvements in the economic indicators, though other states are improving more rapidly,” said Dr. Norin Dollard, Director of Florida *KIDS COUNT*. “We are also pleased to see improvements in the educational domain, but are concerned that children of color are not making gains in reading and math at the same rate as their peers. We are also losing ground with respect to health-care coverage but we are concerned with the direction of our rankings in the health and economic domains. As we continue to see growing numbers of children in our state, more must be done to ensure they have what they need to thrive.”

Dr. Dollard and the Annie E. Casey Foundation point to a number of ways to work toward a solution:

- More needs to be done to ensure that high housing costs and high-poverty neighborhoods do not make poverty an insurmountable trap for families.
- Policies that have proven to improve the well-being of children should be expanded, including improving rates of health insurance, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit at the state level, and continuing to expand education funding equitably.

“Part of ensuring that there are resources to help our children grow and thrive, is ensuring every federal dollar that we are entitled to returns to our state,” added Dr. Dollard. “We must work to ensure that every person in Florida is counted in the 2020 census, especially those deemed hard to count, such as very young children. Florida is at great risk of undercounting its residents and stands to lose millions for healthcare, nutrition, education, transportation and other federal programs. The people who need these programs the most are those who are most likely to go uncounted.”

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* shows how essential accurate data is to sound policymaking. The 2010 census missed 2.2 million kids, and the upcoming count may miss even more if counting very young children is not a priority. The stakes are high: 55 major federal programs, including Head Start and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, allocate more than \$880 billion each year based on census data. In 2016, (the most recent data available) Florida was allocated \$44 billion a year based on these data. A one – percent undercount in Florida will cost us roughly \$177 million per year in just in the five top funding categories related to children and families: Medicaid and Medicare, Children’s Health Insurance Program, Foster Care, Adoption Assistance and Child Care and Development Fund programs.

Release Information

The *2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 17 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

About Florida KIDS COUNT

Florida KIDS COUNT is part of a nationwide KIDS COUNT Network, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Florida KIDS COUNT is in the [Department of Child & Family Studies](#) at the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, University of South Florida.

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The objective of Florida KIDS COUNT is to inform Floridians and their policy makers about the quality of life for Florida's children, and to build leadership and accountability for action on behalf of our children. Using selected key well-being indicators and general demographic profiles, Florida KIDS COUNT provides a consistent and reliable source of information that is adaptable to a variety of uses such as policy analysis, grant and proposal writing, needs assessments and public education.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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